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AUTHOR Theodossin, Ernest
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ABSTRACT

This study looks briefly at work done in the field of teacher selection. It then examines the interviewing arrangements at Balls Park College (Australia) in 1970-71, when candidates were being selected for the teacher training course which began in October 1971. An attempt is made to discern relationships existing among: (1) the data available to interviewers; (2) their evaluations of interviewees; and (3) final assessments of successful candidates at the completion of their training course. The predictive value of interviewer assessments is explored, and suggestions are offered as to how entrance procedures might in the future be modified. Interviewing forms and references are appended. (CB)

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Research Report

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SELECTION THROUGH INTERVIEWING:

ENTRANCE PROCEDURES IN TEACHER RECRUITMENT

Dr. Ernest Theodossin,
Staff Tutor

October, 1983.

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The study herewith printed was completed in 1976. The college concerned no longer exists, but the basic approach to candidate selection remains commonplace throughout the education service, and the material has been made available as a contribution to the continuing debate over the appropriateness of interviewing as a major selection strategy.

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SELECTION THROUGH INTERVIEWING:

ENTRANCE PROCEDURES IN TEACHER RECRUITMENT

THE BACKGROUND

How to predict teaching success and the extent to which one has been successful in doing so are concerns which have exercised the thought and imagination of the educational world for many generations. The difficulties are legion, and the attempts at providing answers numerous. Nevertheless, no solution has won general support.

In Britain, the traditional pattern has been for intending teachers who wish to train in a college of education to present themselves for selection or rejection to educational institutions. As Taylor (1969) reminds us,

> *Few students are accepted without interview...Interviewing procedures vary widely. At the one extreme the candidates spend a quarter of an hour or less talking with the principal, vice-principal or head of a subject department, who is responsible in the light of the impression created and the candidate's references and qualifications for deciding whether or not a place can be offered. At the other extreme, some colleges have complex batteries of tests and structured interview procedures...*

Thus, at one end of the selection process stands the interview, and at the other a growing number of objective paper tests. Between the two many variations are possible.

As long ago as 1933, Corey could claim that most of the evidence about interviewing was 'more or less controversial' and could suggest, somewhat sardonically, that the actual interview might be profitably supplemented by 'interviewing the person submitting the references'. (Corey, 1933). More recently, after an exhaustive study of the literature, Crocker (1974) concluded that

> *...There is a considerable body of research evidence to show that usually we cannot interview with any predictive certainty of selecting the more able student teachers. Wrong perceptual cues, interviewer personality, shortage of candidates for certain subjects all combine to reduce most correlations to around zero.*

On a theoretical and philosophical level, Silverman (1974) has argued that the very language of grading is culturally biassed and bound, and has reminded us of 'how language uses us, how it imposes its will'.

On the other hand, individual studies have often suggested that the interview is not without statistical validity. Shaw (1952) concluded his study by claiming that

> *...the interview as structured in this study was found to be an effective means of contributing to the determination of fitness for teacher-training among students preparing to be high school social studies teachers.*

In a study of the selection of doctoral candidates at New York University, Anderson (1954) evolved a guided interview whose evaluations proved to be 'statistically significant' when compared with later 'faculty ratings', thus leading him to suggest that the guided interview '...might well be used, with adaptations, in teacher selection'. And Burroughs (1958) working with postgraduates at Birmingham, could conclude that

> *...the interview is not greatly inferior to other types of admission data as far as the prediction of teaching ability is concerned.*

The very controversy surrounding the interview has led researchers and writers towards two kinds of solutions: a) trying to improve interviewing, or b) endeavouring to supplement (or replace) the interview with written tests.

In 1958, Kahn and Cannell (1958) advocated a 'training approach' for interviewing which would be based on

> *...skill practice, with emphasis on the group as the unit of training. Extensive use of role-playing is suggested, with the trainee being given ample opportunity to be successively interviewer, respondent, and observer. The analysis of recorded interviews is useful as a preliminary to actual interviewing practices. Recording the practice interviews of trainees is also suggested as a means of letting the novice hear exactly what he does in the interview situation.*

The Jessups (1975) have provided a summary of the ways in which interviewers can use 'research evidence' to help achieve 'certain objectives':

1. *To get the interviewee to talk more, one should place chairs at a comfortable distance apart, look the interviewee in the eye and smile when asking questions, not interrupt or have long pauses, ask open-ended questions, and talk about oneself, giving one's own views.*

2. *To get the interviewee to enlarge on topics, one should make encouraging noises and/or disagree with him.*

3. *To get the interviewee to stop talking or to change the topic one should agree with him, look away, and/or sit forward or move one's arms forward.*

4. *To get accurate information one should ask open-ended, then probing and leading questions.*

Much of the work done on improving the interview has, of course, not been conducted specifically with teacher selection in mind, and a great deal of what has been done has emerged from the United States. Moreover, in America the interview itself has developed in ways which might not be altogether acceptable in Britain. For example, Dunhill Inc., a national personnel employment agency which places well qualified middle- and senior-level applicants, includes in its 'Interview Guide' extremely probing questions:

> *Which one of your parents do you feel influenced you most?*
>
> *In looking at your family, who do you feel is going to be the most successful?*
>
> *What has been the longest period you have been away from home since you were married?*
>
> *This is in confidence, of course, and you need not answer. Do you feel you have a successful marriage?*
>
> *Do you have many long-standing friendships?*
>
> *What kind of people do you have as friends at the present time? Please describe your 'best' friend.*
>
> *If you were starting all over, what other fields would you consider?*
>
> *Do you ever have the feeling of affecting some people negatively? Why? Do you regard this as more of a defect in them rather than in yourself?*
>
> *What kind of a supervisor do you feel you work best for?*[1]

Whether applicants answer such questions accurately is perhaps uncertain. Obviously, many of these questions would be inappropriate with school candidates for teacher-training places, but all the questions might well be asked of mature applicants and of practising teachers, although some individuals might find such personal questions offensive. In any event, what the Dunhill form reveals is an attitude where no area of an interviewee's life is necessarily considered private by his interviewer.

The desire for interviewer training and interview structure is perhaps understandable among researchers who must obviously seek to control the number of variables if they are to measure interview effectiveness. However, in this area as well there remains considerable controversy, and one may well wonder whether any kind of standardised training and/or interview can ever suit all interviewers and/or interviewees.[2]

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1. This is taken from unpublished material. The Interview Guide contains altogether 73 items from which the above 9 have been culled.

2. The continued prevalence of interviewing as a means of candidate selection in education may be explained by the observation that interviewing itself is an activity which requires little preparation, that it sanctions the power of the interviewer, allows him to choose his future companions, and exonerates him of any responsibility for having made a bad choice. This latter point is particularly strange, for while a company buyer or an investment broker will surely reap disapproval for having bought badly and lost either opportunity or money, the educational interviewer is never blamed for inadequate selection: instead, the interviewee (student or teacher) is seen as having betrayed the faith shown in him.

At the other extreme, researchers have endeavoured to construct tests capable of predicting teaching ability. As a preliminary, efforts have been made to define those individual personality attributes which correlate most positively with teaching success. As might be expected, much of this evidence has proved negative: certain characteristics have been found not to correlate very significantly. Evans (1957), for example, found no evidence to suggest that students with many and varied interests were more successful in their course of training than those with fewer and less active interests; and a similar lack of evidence that students who were keenly interested in the work of a teacher did better than those who were less interested. Cortis (1968) found, in three constituent colleges of education of the University of Manchester School of Education, that

> *...Correlates of classroom success included previous teaching experience, lower verbal fluency and naturalistic and tender-minded attitudes to education. Correlates of academic success included high verbal ability, sound entrance qualifications and idealistic and tough-minded attitudes to education.*

Also at Manchester, Warburton et al (1963) found that a 'personality questionnaire (Cattell's 16P.F.) was the best single predictor of teaching mark'. Obst (1966), testing with the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Aesthetic Scale discovered that men students scored less high than expected on aesthetic aspects, despite the established 'validity and reliability' of earlier Scale testing, which had suggested otherwise. Crocker (1974), administering a flexibility test derived from American models to British college of education students, found that

> *...a test of flexibility will predict, albeit at a low level, the marks that college of education tutors will give to their students.*

None of this research can be described as wholly satisfactory: either the samples involved have been too small; or variables have remained uncontrolled; or final assessments have been called into dispute; or the results have led to, at best, cautious conclusions. In turn, such results have prompted further, and more general, criticism. Super and Crites (1962), having reviewed the range of objective tests available in 1962, concluded that

> *...as long as teaching remains an underpaid occupation with too few applicants for available positions there is not likely to be much pressure for the development of better selection methods...*

In 1966, Ebel (1966), again reviewing 'Relevant Research', summed up his findings by noting that

> *Few of the programs that are selective are highly selective. Many students of very ordinary ability are admitted.... Human, interpersonal relations are obviously important in teaching, but attempts to use personality tests as bases for selecting prospective teachers have not been successful.*

Ebel admitted that 'a large degree of uncertainty beclouds our efforts to predict teaching success'.

Few would disagree with Ebel's larger conclusion, or with his observation that 'selection is more nominal than functional', by which is meant that while candidates may be refused admission at one institution, the persistent candidate is unlikely to find repeated rejection, provided he applies to a sufficiently large number of institutions. Taylor (1969) has put this most succinctly:

> *...There is a place, somewhere, for nearly all the qualified individuals who apply. Apart from a handful of candidates who prove unacceptable to all the colleges that receive their applications or interview them, questions of personality and suitability are largely irrelevant. The really important thing is not an individual's suitability for teaching, but his possession of certain minimum qualifications...As yet we have not accepted this situation into our thinking and pronouncements about the way in which future teachers are selected, or select themselves.*

The extent to which this is true is demonstrated by Crocker's (1974) reminder that

> *...in 1966 Colleges of Education took 33,000 new students - only 140 'acceptable' [an undefined DES term] students failed to gain a place. In 1967 some 36,000 new students commenced their course of study, while 239 were described as 'acceptable' but unplaced.*

Later Crocker also points out (via Bront's work) that in 1954 the failure rate among final examination candidates for various professions was: Chartered Accountants, 69%; Library Association, 58%; Law Society, 46%; Chartered Institute of Secretaries, 65%; Teaching 2%-3%.

The inescapable conclusion is that almost anyone who wants to teach will eventually find placement somewhere; and, providing he stays the course, he will eventually qualify. The corollary is, of course, that there can be only the smallest minority of students who wish to teach and who are irrevocably lost to the nation: rejected in Hertfordshire or Essex, they may well be accepted in Lincolnshire or Sussex; or, the other way round. This situation has made it fairly clear that there exists no desperate and pressing need to improve methods of teacher selection, for most often, in Taylor's phrase, teachers 'select themselves'.

At the same time, the prevailing situation has also led with understandable logic to the conclusion that there may well be no need to bother selecting teachers at all. According to this view, teacher selection has no professional repercussions beyond the preservation of a 'pecking order' among training institutions. In addition, if, according to DES estimates, in 1966, '...in staff wages alone, [the cost] of the interviews was approximately £750,000' then we may be wasting not only our time, but our money as well. Taylor has put the case somewhat obliquely by observing that,

> *...It is interesting to note...that admissions to higher education in some other countries are entirely based on the academic record of candidates, and interviews and personality assessments play no part. In Sweden...this is true even of medicine, one of the most professionalized types of training. In the words of the Dean of a Swedish medical faculty: '... medicine is a wide and varied field, in which there is scope for many different types of personality.*

In fact, if not in intention, this would also appear to be true of teaching in Britain, and one should perhaps bear this in mind in reviewing the research findings in the following pages.

. . . . . .

THE RESEARCH

Balls Park College of Education is situated approximately mid-way between London and Cambridge, on the outskirts of the county town of Hertford, and is housed in a Jacobean mansion and a variety of modern buildings, the whole surrounded by landscaped gardens and extensive parkland. Because of its beautiful setting and attractive buildings, as well as its geographical location and easy access to transport, Balls Park regularly attracts teacher-training candidates considerably in excess of its permitted annual intake. Therefore, except possibly for shortage subjects, where recruitment has been nationally difficult, Balls Park has generally been in the position of being able to choose among its applicants.

For the purposes of this study, it was decided to examine candidate selection made between 1 October, 1970, and 30 September, 1971, for the three-year course beginning in October, 1971; and to compare the assessments and predictions made during interviews with the final assessments made in July, 1974, at the completion of the certificate course. It was also decided to look at those students who went on to a fourth year and who received a B.Ed. degree in July, 1975, and to compare their qualifications and interview assessments with those of their contemporaries who entered the college at the same time.

Candidate interviewing and selection was the largest single administrative exercise carried out in the college during the period under review. It involved almost three-quarters of the academic staff in, at a rough but conservative estimate, a total of 680 hours' work, equivalent to more than two-thirds of one lecturer's working year, much of this time being provided by the most senior and most highly paid members of staff; and more than a third of the Academic Registrar's year, with the assistance of a part-time (four days per week) clerk.[1]

There were two kinds of applicants:

1. First-choice candidates who had shown a preference for Balls Park over all similar institutions and who were invariably offered an interview, as indeed they must be under Clearing House regulations, unless the number of such applicants exceeds three times the number of available places, which did not apply at Balls Park; 300 such candidates were interviewed.

2. Non-first-choice candidates who had been rejected elsewhere and whose papers were sent on by the Central Registry Clearing House: 109 were interviewed, from a total of 254.

---

1. This calculation allows for scheduled interview time plus ten minutes per interview per interviewer for looking through the candidate's papers and writing the final assessment; it further assumes that lecturers work for a 30-hour week for 33 weeks per year. It does not allow for interviews which ran over the allocated time, or for time spent waiting for candidates (not uncommon when applicants can have up to four separate interviews in one day, only two of which have been already scheduled). It does not include the setting and the marking of English tests taken by some candidates, or the voluntary assistance of students who agree to look after and otherwise assist entrance candidates.

From the latter number an initial selection was made by the Academic Registrar, and the surviving files were then assessed by the Principal who decided whether to offer an interview. The Academic Registrar[1] explained that her first-stage division of the applications was based on an awareness of what the Principal valued: a) range and number of O-Level subjects, with greater emphasis on fewer subjects with high grades than on more with low grades; b) the school report, on the basis of which applicants with weak support were not interviewed unless, 'reading between the lines', she and/or the Principal decided that the head 'doesn't like' the candidate; and c) the Principal's enthusiasms, which she characterised as excluding sport but revealing a 'keen' interest in 'music and drama'. The present Principal had increased the Registrar's responsibility by allowing her to undertake this processing operation, which had not been possible under his predecessor. The Registrar also pointed out that while schools were generally reliable about producing confidential reports, further-education colleges often needed reminders before the reports were made available; in some cases, this could be after the actual interview.

Arrangements for interviewing were made by the Academic Registrar. The time between application submission and interview varied in 1970-71 between one day and more than 90 days; those most rapidly interviewed were often local mature candidates who had applied directly to the college and might be seen almost immediately. The only constraint imposed on interviewing was that, by Clearing House rules, those candidates who had applied between 8 and 15 October had to be seen by 8 December. On a full day (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), fourteen applicants were interviewed.

Candidates travelling considerable distances were offered accommodation for up to two nights. They had to pay their own fares (as did all applicants) and to provide for the cost of bed, breakfast and supper; but tea, coffee and lunch were made available free of charge by the college according to interview times. The college had two beds reserved for women applicants and one for males, although on occasion an additional bed could be made available. Rooms were shared with students whom the Registrar had got to know enjoyed 'looking after candidates': generally three or four such students offered their assistance each year.

Candidates were required to bring certificates with them to confirm their academic qualifications, and these were checked by the Academic Registrar. Once having arrived, applicants were assessed by the following procedures, though not necessarily in any particular order.

1. A twenty-minute general interview conducted by a panel of two and led by either the Principal, the Deputy-Principal or the Senior Tutor.

2. A main-study interview conducted by the subject department and scheduled for twenty minutes for English, history, geography, physical science, maths, physical education and religious studies, and thirty minutes for art, drama, French, biology and music.

---

1. The Academic Registrar was interviewed on 24 March, 1976.

3. Those candidates whose English qualifications were not high enough (Grade 3 in O-Level language, or equivalent) were required to sit an hour's English test. They had already been informed by circular letter about the possibility of taking such a test, which was held in the largest room of the administrative building and timed, but not supervised.

In addition, candidates who passed the general interview but were rejected by the main-study department of their first choice were offered the chance of being interviewed by another main-study department; in 1970-71 nearly twenty per cent of the candidates had more than one main-study interview.

Candidates were told the results of their interview about two weeks after visiting the college, although later in the academic year, as interviewing activity slackened, results were made available more rapidly. The Academic Registrar estimated that she had spent four days a week on interviewing work from October to December, and thereafter approximately one day per week.

Of the whole interviewing process, the Academic Registrar had the following criticisms to make:

1. There were often gaps between interviews, so that candidates had to spend considerable time waiting for the next interview.

2. Candidates were nervous and were not given an insight into the college itself; if they asked, they were shown around by student guides, but this procedure was not really successful, and candidates could talk to students only if they had a meal, which two-thirds did not; afternoon candidates never had a meal.

3. Although candidates required certificates to prove qualifications on the actual interview day, no subsequent check was made on any examinations they might have passed during subsequent months, so that it was possible that candidates without admission requirements at the time of interview might still lack those requirements when they began training.[1]

This interviewing system had been introduced by 'gentle modification' by the Principal[2] shortly after taking up his post on 1 January, 1968. His predecessor had done all the interviewing herself and had looked for 'personal integrity, the ability to speak, strong personality, moral fibre and commitment to faith'. There had been no interviewing on a subject basis. He had made the following changes:

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1. Normally (i.e., except in the case of mature students and/or shortage subjects), candidates were required to have five subjects at O-Level; or three at O-Level and one at A-Level; or two at O-Level and two at A-Level; or three at A-Level, provided there was evidence of other courses having been pursued; the same subject was not allowed at O- and A-Levels in fulfilling minimum qualifications; and CSE grade I was allowed as an O-Level pass. These, of course, were the qualifications required before teacher training could commence, but they were not held by all candidates at the time of interview.

2. The Principal was interviewed on 17 March, 1976.

1. The Deputy-Principal was given charge of interviewing mature candidates because, in her previous post, she 'had had a great deal to do with matures'.

2. The Principal arranged for the general interview to be conducted by a man and a woman because he felt young women might feel 'intimidated' when confronted by two men.

3. Initially, the Principal confined panel interviewing to lecturers 'senior enough to have had experience' but later extended the task to more junior members of staff to 'give people experience'. No one was permitted to interview if he felt that the individual's 'personality was so strong that candidates' might feel 'inhibited'.

4. He introduced main-study interviews because he wanted to be sure that a) 'the person can cope with one particular discipline' and b) the department was 'willing to take the person'. Arrangements for main-study interviewing were a purely departmental matter.

The Principal pointed out that some colleges have mass-interviewing days when all members of staff are freed from other commitments in order to process hundreds of applicants, but he categorised this procedure as the 'pig-market' system and considered it cold and inhumane. He saw colleges as ranked in five leagues with the first league (e.g. Coventry, Worcester, Westminster, but Homerton as an exception) as 'large mixed colleges in or near reasonably sized towns'; second-league colleges as 'mixed colleges in nice surroundings'(Balls Park belonged here) and as attracting applicants 'largely by personal recommendation'; and leagues three to five as colleges in 'remote rural areas and/or single sexed'.

About the interviewing procedures, the Principal made the following observations and assessments:

1. He never interviewed anyone who had no chance.

2. The first batch of candidates were the best: they were strongly motivated, put in their applications straight-away and came from schools 'where they know what to do'.[1]

3. The most important evidence in assessing a candidate was a) the academic record, b) what the head said, and c) personality as revealed in the interview.

4. He felt that candidates had the advantage of a) time to ask questions and b) an invitation to look around the college, to talk to any student, to 'find out what it's like', to learn a great deal about the college and to realise that 'tutors do care about work and are human'.

5. He admitted that assessment was 'hard' to make, that he had 'made errors', that he had 'taken partially-sighted people' and 'people with serious medical problems', and that overall 'no one knows' but that 'one flatters oneself...'.

---

1. The suggestion sometimes made at Balls Park that better-qualified applicants arrive later in the interviewing year, having been rejected by more prestigious colleges, is not substantiated by the evidence: see below, p.12.

6. Even though 'we are probably prodigal with resources', on an open-entry system he was firm: 'I would hate it!'.

Apart from what he could gather about the candidate during the interview, each interviewer had the following written evidence about applicants:

1. A record of public examinations passed. For most candidates this consisted of O-Level and CSE results; a few candidates (mostly matures and those who had left school) had A-Level results as well, but this was unusual. Among those candidates who completed the certificate course in 1974, the correlation between the number of O-Level (or equivalent) passes obtained by the time of interview and a) final assessment of teaching ability was -.02 and b) final main-study marks was +.01, neither of which is significant.

2. Predictions from their teachers of the grades candidates might expect to get in public examinations for which they were preparing. Of the 288 predictions of A-Level results among applicants who later entered the college, 61% (177) were higher than the actual results, 11% (33) were lower, and 27% (78) were correct: therefore approximately one in four predictions was accurate.

3. The confidential reference and the school's (or other appropriate institution's or individual's) assessment of the candidate's suitability for teaching (on an A to E scale). The correlation between such assessments and the candidates' final assessments of teaching ability was +.06, which is not significant.[1]

---

1. All college assessment (with the exception to be noted below) was done on a conventional A to E grading scale, with plus and minus marks allowed on the first three grades only. For the purpose of calculations, these grades were converted to numbers on the basis of A=10; A-=9; B+=8; B=7; B-=6; C+=5; C=4; C-=3; D=2; E=1; this conversion scale is also in use in the college. The exception parenthetically noted above is the assessment of teaching ability; here no grades were given, and there was only a prose evaluation (later used on confidential reports to employing LEA's). Therefore, in order to calculate correlation coefficients, it was necessary first to transcribe the written reports into equivalent grades. The system adopted was as follows (the percentage refers to the proportion of students thus designated): Excellent=A (8%); Good=B (48%); Average=C (37%); Weak=D (6%); Fail=E (less than 1%). For one student, the final assessment form appears to have been lost. A perusal of the proportional grading reveals that a higher proportion of the 192 students here discussed were described as good rather than as average, which offers semantic difficulties. The explanation is the Principal's insistence on positive final assessments. One should also note that of the 225 students who eventually began training in 1971, 25 (11%) later withdrew as unsuitable for teaching, and that the final assessments concern only the survivors.

4. Information about the extent (if any) of candidates' experience of teaching prior to the interview. Not all applicants answered the question about teaching experience, but of the 165 who did and who later completed the certificate course, the mean final teaching grade for those with some experience of teaching was 5.7 and for those with no such experience was 5.6, which suggests a slight advantage among the former.[1]

The extent to which interviewers relied on the above information when making their assessments is, of course, unknown (one possible exception is discussed below). Nevertheless, none of this evidence correlates significantly either with the final assessments of teaching ability or final main-study grades.

Table I, below, gives a month-by-month picture of the interviewing pattern.

Month	Arrivals	Withdrawals+	Rejected	Total	% Rejected	Mean Grade	Mean* O-Levels	Runni Total
October	40	7	17	64	27	5.1	6.0	47
November	90	19	37	146	25	4.8	5.5	156
December	26	12	21	59	36	4.7	5.7	194
January	26	14	21	61	34	4.9	5.9	234
February	8	3	6	17	35	4.5	6.6	245
March	5	5	4	14	29	4.9	6.1	255
April	1	1	2	4	50	4.5	4.5	257
May	5	1	2	8	25	5.3	5.4	263
June	6	0	4	10	40	4.8	6.9	269
July	1	2	1	4	25	6.0	6.0	272
August	3	0	2	5	40	4.2	4.4	275
September	11	1	1	13	8	5.8	6.3	287

+These candidates were accepted but did not take up their places.

*Among those accepted, the mean number of O-Levels was 6.1; among the rejected 5.0

TABLE I: MONTH-BY-MONTH ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWING, 1970-71.

What the table reveals is that nearly 82% of the acceptances had been made by the end of the fourth month; that the mean grade given in the general interview did not vary dramatically during these four months, and neither did the mean number of O-Levels, with the 64 who were seen during October scoring marginally higher on both counts. After January, the volume of interviewing fell sharply.

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1. Among the 25 students who withdrew because of unsuitability for teaching, 20 provided this information: 11 had already had some experience of teaching, and 9 had had none.

During the 1970-71 academic year, 409 applicants were interviewed for the course beginning in October, 1971, of whom three were actually interviewed and accepted after the commencement of the autumn term in 1971. Of the 409 interviewees, 291 were offered a place in the college.[1]

Of the 291[2] accepted candidates, 66 withdrew for a variety of personal reasons (e.g. family complications, changed plans, offers of university places, etc.) prior to October, 1971. Thus 225 were left to begin the course in 1971, and of this number 33 did not complete the course because: 25 withdrew (see below) as unsuitable for teaching; 7 transferred to other colleges; and 1 failed. In this way, 192 students actually began the course and persevered through the end of the 1973-74 academic session, of which number one failed because of an unsatisfactory standard in her main-study work, although she did pass on teaching practice.

One of the remaining 118 candidates was actually offered a place but died in a road accident during the summer; the 117 candidates who were not offered a place were rejected for the following reasons (% of 409 total in brackets):

1. 8 (2%) failed the English test;

2. 46 (11%) were judged unsuitable for teaching;

3. 20 (5%) were unacceptable to any main-study department;

4. 39 (10%) were considered unacceptable both for teaching and any main-study department;

5. 5 (1%) were unacceptable for other reasons (e.g. insufficient qualifications, bad references, too old).

---

1. During this period, the College was permitted by the DES to maintain an overall student population of 640 places. In calculating how many places to offer for next Autumn's entry, the Principal had to take account of: a) the number of third-year students who would be completing their courses during the coming summer; b) the number of first- and second-year students who withdrew or transferred during the course of the year, which meant that the overall student population could theoretically fall from day to day, and certainly changed during the year of interviewing; c) an anticipated number of withdrawals prior to Autumn entry; d) an anticipated number of withdrawals and transfers after Autumn entry. The actual numbers were unpredictable and frequently erratic; occasional shortfall might be alleviated by accepting transfers from other colleges. The situation led to the Principal's playing what he described as the 'numbers game', i.e. risking more acceptances than there were places available, so that at any given time the student population might actually be slightly below or above 640.

2. The apparent discrepancy between this figure and the total given in Table I is explained by four students who were interviewed and accepted after the commencement of the Autumn, 1971 term.

As mentioned previously, the General Interview was conducted by a panel of two, chaired by either the Principal (for candidates under the age of 26) or the Deputy-Principal (for matures), with the Senior Tutor deputising for either, as required. The chairperson was assisted by a panel member, a woman lecturer for either the Principal or the Senior Tutor (both males), and a male lecturer for the Deputy-Principal (a female). In 1970-71, among full-time academic staff, 18 out of 31 male lecturers and 18 out of 22 female lecturers interviewed applicants.

The interviews were conducted in the offices of the Principal or the Deputy-Principal, in both of which the panel was seated behind a table or a desk, directly opposite to the candidate, who was offered a soft, comfortable chair. Both the chairperson and the lecturer-interviewer were required to fill in forms (see Appendix). After the interview, both panel members were required to grade the applicant on a five-point scale (A to E, with plus and minus permitted on the first three grades) on which C (average) was generally required for acceptance.

The panel's function was to determine the applicant's suitability for teaching. By comparing the grading of the chairpersons with successful applicants' final teaching ability assessments, the following correlation coefficients were obtained.

Interviewer	N			Mean Grades			R		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Principal	26	127	153	5.1	5.8	5.7	+.11	+.04	+.06
Deputy-Prin.	8	30	38	4.7	5.6	5.4	+.35	-.11	-.08
Senior Tutor	2	21	23	5.0	5.6	5.5	.00	-.12	-.22

TABLE II: ANALYSIS OF CHAIRPERSONS' ASSESSMENT GRADING.

None of these correlation coefficients is significant, either because they are too close to zero or because, where they are not, as with the Deputy-Principal and male candidates or the Senior Tutor and female candidates, the result does not reach the level of significance for two-tailed tests for so small a number of pairs, and the possibility of chance variants cannot be excluded (Senter 1969). The overall correlation coefficient for the work of the chairpersons taken altogether is +.02, which is again of no significance.

If we turn to the panel members, taken collectively again, the results may be seen in Table III. Once more, the overall impression suggests no significance, although the coefficient for the assessment of male candidates borders on the level of initial significance (though only beyond the 0.10 level): with a larger number of pairs, if R equalled +.32

we might acknowledge a modest level of predictive value, but with only 29 pairs we are not safe in making such an assumption. If it nevertheless

N			Mean Grades			R		
Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
29	168	193	5.1	5.8	5.7	+.32	-.05	-.02

TABLE III: ANALYSIS OF PANEL MEMBERS' ASSESSMENT GRADING.

appears that the coefficients for men candidates are consistently somewhat better than for women candidates, there are perhaps two areas where we might look for explanation: a) only 29 of the 38 males who eventually began the course appear to have been interviewed by panel members,[1] and b) of the 25 students who withdrew from the college after completing a part of their course, 23 were female, i.e., the withdrawal rate (after October, 1971) for men was 5% and for women 12%, which means that the general assessment of women was altogether less satisfactory.

The group of students who withdrew after October, 1971, represents 11% of those who began the course. Interestingly, their mean grades were 6.1 from the chairpersons and 5.8 from panel members, in both instances higher than the means attained by the whole group of students, which suggests that these students were not necessarily seen as 'risks' but were generally regarded as likely successes. Indeed, only one of these candidates, a male, was viewed as a genuine risk and was graded low (2.0) by both the chairperson and the panel member; if we discount his grading, the mean grades of the remaining 24 withdrawals were 6.2 and 6.0 respectively.

If we seek some explanation as to why the panel should consider more suitable for teaching those very candidates who later saw themselves as unsuited for teaching, at least a part of the explanation may lie in their academic qualifications: the mean number of O-Levels possessed by all of the candidates who were offered a place by the college was 6.1, while the mean number of O-Levels possessed by the 25 students under discussion here was 6.8, which suggests that academic qualifications may have played a significant part in the assessment of a candidate's suitability for teaching.

Corroboration of this possibility can be found by taking the whole group of 409 candidates actually interviewed and comparing the number of O-Levels possessed at the time of interview with the ratings given by

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1. On some occasions, when a free panel member could not be found, only the chairperson conducted the interview.

panel members. The results, set out in Table IV, reveal coefficients both of which are significant (beyond the 0.01 level) and indeed

No. O-Levels and Assessments made by	R
Chairpersons	+.37
Panel Members	+.36

TABLE IV: COMPARISON BETWEEN NO. O-LEVELS AND ASSESSMENT OF SUITABILITY FOR TEACHING.

represent the only significant coefficients thus far revealed. This suggests that academic qualifications could have been used as a moderately accurate predictor of how the panel would assess teaching potential. We may remind ourselves, however, that the correlation coefficient obtained by comparing the number of O-Levels possessed at the time of interview with the actual final assessment obtained for teaching ability by students who completed the course was -.02, which indicates no significant correlation in reality.

Turning to the thirty-six panel members who interviewed, we find, as might be expected, considerable variations in performance, as shown below in Table V, which has been compiled on the basis of including data

Panel Member	No. Interviewed	No. Rejected	% Rejected	N*	R
A	45	8	18	20	+.05
B	27	11	41	14	-.15
C	27	2	7	14	.00
D	22	5	23		
E	19	4	21		
F	18	2	11	12	-.42
G	18	4	22	13	-.05
H	18	1	6		
I	16	3	19	10	+.27
J	15	2	13		
K	15	1	7		
L	15	2	13		
M	14	3	21		
N	11	2	18		
O	10	1	10		

*Number of candidates who completed the three-year certificate course.

TABLE V: PANEL MEMBERS' INTERVIEWING.

only where ten or more measurements were available; in the case of correlation coefficients, the comparison is between the panel member's assessment and the final teaching-ability assessment. Again, none of the coefficients reaches a level of significance for the number of pairs involved. An interesting feature is Interviewer B's rejection rate, which is nearly double the next largest rate.

A study of the forms (see Appendix for specimen copies) filled in by interviewers shows both inconsistency and confusion, as can be seen by comparing responses within areas specified for comment.

1. Appearance. Interviewers A ('well groomed'), D ('quite smart'), E ('dressed loudly but made own outfit'), F ('suitably and pleasantly dressed'), J ('plum coloured suit', 'off-white trouser suit'), L ('quietly dressed'), and N ('smart modern dress') interpreted this in terms of clothing. Interviewers B ('mouth permanently open'), C ('lovely smile, sparkling eyes'), and G ('very neat fair hair') were concerned with the head; while Interviewers I ('fair') and O ('good') commented in the most general terms.

2. Speech. Interviewers A ('fluent'), B ('fluent), D ('clear'), E ('fair'), F ('satisfactory'), I ('good clear'), M ('good, clear, fluent'), N ('clear and fluent'), and O ('fair') made general assessments. Interviewers C ('ungrammatical', 'slight northern accent'), G ('London twang in vowels, sibilant'), H ('lisps but clear nevertheless'), J ('Yorkshire and Ukranian') and L ('slight lack of precision in S sounds') were more precise.

3. Intellect. Out of 45 interviews, Interviewer A only four times attempted a response, and then vaguely ('good', 'weak?'). Interviewers B ('rather limited outside maths'), D ('only 3 O-Levels'), O ('work of excellent standards'), F ('5 weak O-Levels'), G ('very well qualified'), K ('finds exams difficult'), M ('just qualified'), and O ('little paper evidence') interpreted this in terms of examination passes, while Interviewers I ('not academic but practical', 'can think independently'), and N ('good, sensible, thoughtful') looked beyond academic ability. Interviewer L seemed uncertain ('good apparently', 'apparently not good'). Out of 290 forms, 58 (20%) were left blank at this point.[1]

4. Personality. There was considerable confusion here. Interviewers C ('a merry person') and G ('sense of humour') seemed to be concerned with the candidate's outlook on life. Interviewers A ('charming girl'), F ('very pleasing'), I ('pleasant, friendly, likeable'), L ('pleasant') and M ('fairly quiet and cooperative') tended to note vague amiability. Interviewers D ('sunny'), E ('friendly, warm'), H ('enjoys people and life'), and J ('quite forthcoming') seemed to admire outgoing individuals. On the other hand, Interviewer L appeared to note restraint ('more normal than school led us to believe', 'calm and fairly outgoing').

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1. The whole of this analysis of panel member forms is based on a study of the 290 forms filled in by the 15 interviewers who each saw a minimum of ten candidates; some interviewers saw only one or two candidates.

5. Interests. Only expected pursuits appeared here, e.g. sport, reading, music, theatre, ornithology, social work, bell-ringing, dressmaking, Brownies, dancing, etc. No one, for example, mentioned television, politics, sex, cinema or making money, although these are all fairly common preoccupations among students, and traditionally so.

6. Reading. Many responses here suggested either limited reading ('not wide') or else vagueness ('quite a lot', 'books about people', 'fiction'). Some comments were very specific ('Hardy', 'Dickens and MacLean') but there was no clear attempt to separate reading done for school or college coursework from reading for pleasure, or to distinguish between books once read and reading as a regular pursuit.

7. Sense of Vocation. When this section was answered, the responses suggested either that candidates a) had a long-standing commitment to teaching ('always wanted to be a teacher'), b) were strongly attracted to children ('obviously interested in children', 'likes children') or c) had teachers in the family ('cousin teacher', 'father headmaster'). Some candidates accepted for training were obviously without traditional vocational commitments ('doubtful', 'not too strong', 'says she wants to teach', 'long holidays, but likes children', 'appears genuine' and 'has not definitely decided to teach').

8. Ability to work on her/his own. This question baffled many interviewers: 49% of the forms were left blank at this point.

What emerges from a study of these forms is that, without an actual assessment at the bottom of the form, it would be difficult from the comments to determine whether the candidate was acceptable or not. Accepted candidates had their speech described as 'rough, disjointed', 'tends to mutter', or 'not very good'; their intellect characterised as 'immature', 'limited', or 'not high'; and their personality designated 'immature', 'a bit limp', 'very shy, almost wooden' and 'lacks individual personality'. On the other hand, an applicant could be perceived as possessing 'fair' appearance, 'fairly good' speech, 'average but not academic' intellect, and a 'lively and very pleasant' personality, and still be rejected. The forms themselves are vaguely structured, with no clear definition of terms; the relative weightings to be given to specific sections is unknown; and the overall effect is to encourage the interviewer to make a subjective evaluation. Anyone presented with a dozen completed forms and a dozen assembled applicants might encounter difficulties in matching the two sets. In the end, the forms often reveal somewhat more about the interviewers than the interviewees.

Apart from satisfying the panel in the general interview of their suitability for teaching, applicants were also required to convince a main-study department of their ability to sustain work in a particular subject. Table VI sets out the results of main-study interviewing.

In analysing Table VI, one should bear in mind that:

1. The figures do not include any of the 25 students who withdrew from teacher training, since none of them suggested that it was an inability to cope with main-study work which prompted the withdrawal.

Department	Mean Grade on interviewing	No. Interviewed students who completed course	R	Of 21 students who changed main studies after entering college:	
				Lost	Gained
English	3.7	18	-.32	4	5
History	4.0	24	+.25	3	1
Art	4.9	20	+.22	3	7
French	3.9	13	+.34	3	0
Geography	5.3	16	+.15	1	2
Phys. Science	5.9	6	-.10	0	0
Biology	5.8	15	+.03	2	1
Maths	5.5	10	+.31	1	0
Music	4.6	13	+.67	0	0
Drama	5.2	10	+.10	2	1
P.E.	4.9	14	+.04	1	3
R.S.	4.7	9	+.17	1	1

TABLE VI: MAIN-STUDY INTERVIEWING.

2. The figures in columns two and three do not include the 21 students who changed their main studies after entering college.

3. The total number (168) of students dealt with in columns two and three omits not only the 21 students explained above but also ignores two students who entered after the beginning of the academic year and for whom no main-study interview assessment is available, and one student who was rejected by the art department but whose parents protested and who was subsequently admitted (her final main-study assessment was 5.0).

For the 409 candidates who were interviewed in the college, the main-study interviewing pattern was as presented in Table VII. When a candidate had been accepted at the general interview but rejected at the main-study interview, efforts were made to find an accommodating main-study department. Thus, the 409 candidates had altogether at least 486 main-study interviews during the year.

Applicants	No Interview	1 Interview	2 Interviews	3 Interviews
Candidates who began course (225)	5	183	32	5
Candidates who did not begin course (184)	1	141	40	1
Total (409)	6	324	72	6

TABLE VII: NUMBER OF MAIN-STUDY INTERVIEWS.

The overall correlation between main-study interviews of the 168 students accounted for in Table VI and their final main-study grades is as follows: men, +.11; women, +.14; all, +.12.

From the above information, we can make the following observations about main-study interviewing:

1. Given the values for N, the only coefficient which suggests any predictive value is that for music-department interviewing, +.67, which is significant beyond the 0.02 level. In this respect it is interesting to note that these interviews a) were 30 minutes long, b) required the applicant to make music, i.e. demonstrate his skill, and c) were conducted by the same member of staff. Of no other department were a), b) and c) all true.

2. Shortage-subject departments (physical science, biology, maths) tended to assess candidates more generously than departments (English, history) which had no difficulty in attracting candidates. An exception is French, which was also a shortage subject.

Taken as a whole, the general picture of candidate selection at Balls Park during the 1970-71 academic year reveals that in only one subject department (music) did assessments show any significant predictive value. Such assessments involved 23 of the 1304 assessments made during this period, or less than 2%. Statistically, more than 98% of the assessments yield coefficients which are not significant. In terms of the three general groups of interviewers, correlations between initial and final assessments are as given in Table VIII, and none may be construed as significant.

Interviewers	R
Chairpersons	+.02
Panel Members	-.02
Main Studies	+.12

TABLE VIII: CORRELATION BETWEEN INTERVIEWING & FINAL ASSESSMENTS.

Of the 225 students who eventually arrived in October, 1971, 181 (80%) had made Balls Park their first choice, 42 (19%) their second choice, and one each a third and fourth choice.

At the time of their interviews, evidence about these candidates' academic achievements was, of course, confined to a record of public examination results obtained prior to making application. When they actually arrived to begin their course, their overall academic achievements had altered: the mean number of O-Level passes was now 6.3, and A-Level passes were distributed as shown in Table IX, which suggests that approximately 34% would have been academically qualified to enter university courses.

No. Students	No. A-Levels	% Total No. Students
76	0	34
71	1	32
54	2	24
23	3	10
1	4	-

TABLE IX: A-LEVELS HELD BY 1971-74 CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

From the group of 225 students there were 23 (10%, but 13½% of the 192 survivors) who, having completed their certificate course in July, 1974, went on for a fourth year at the University of Cambridge, under the aegis of whose Institute of Education the college worked, to take B.Ed. degrees, which all were awarded in July, 1975. Twenty-two of the 23 students had declared an interest in the B.Ed. degree at their initial interview in 1970-71. An examination of their qualifications shows that they were initially significantly better qualified than other students:

1. While the mean number of O-Levels held by the 225 students was 6.3, the mean number for B.Ed. students was 7.3.

2. B.Ed. students (10% of the whole) possessed 18% of the A-Levels held by the college group, and 17 of them (84%) were in possession of the two A-Level passes needed for university entrance in 1971.

3. B.Ed. students were more highly rated by (at a mean grade of 6.0) chairpersons and panel members than were the general body of candidates (5.6 and 5.7 respectively).

Only 6 students (3% of the course survivors) can be said to have found their way to a degree qualification entirely through a college of education, having arrived without the qualifications necessary for university entrance; but of these six, four were mature candidates over the age of 26, and hence in a category to which entrance restrictions are less rigorously applied by many institutions. The overwhelming majority of B.Ed. students appear to have been a virtually self-selecting group.

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Before coming to any general conclusions, it would be well to consider the difficulties inherent in any study of this nature. They may be grouped under four broad headings:

1. We are ignorant about rejected candidates. The Jessups (1975) have observed that,

> *The ideal validation study from a research viewpoint would be one in which all applicants for a job were tested on the experimental battery but the scores were ignored and all were selected for the job...We would then be able to assess the later performance of candidates at all levels of potential. Probability estimates of success could be calculated for all categories of candidates.*

This possibility would be especially useful for teaching, for, as has been noted before, the vast majority of candidates rejected at one college are accepted at another, so that three years later virtually all may well be in school employment. Moreover, from the point of view of those making the actual selection, it may seem (subconsciously or otherwise) less important to select potentially gifted teachers than to avoid taking in students they see as potentially troublesome and/or objectionable as individuals.

2. We may question the validity of final assessments. All of the correlations made between interview grading and final assessments assume, of course, that the latter are valid measurements of students' achievements. Needless to say, this is a much disputed area, but one too complex for us here to rehearse the arguments which have been advanced for and against: interested readers are referred to the discussion in Crocker (1974) pp.117-30.

3. Students change their directions within education after entering college. Interviewers may be assessing a candidate who professes to wish to teach infants and to take main-study geography; a year later the same ex-candidate may be preparing to teach art in a secondary school. Such changes may mean that the basis on which the original assessment was made is no longer valid.

4. We assume a uniform rate of achievement among students. If all students do fourteen weeks of teaching practice, it does not necessarily follow that they will all fulfil their potential to the same extent within the same period of time, so that there is always the possibility that potential perceived is not actually realised by some candidates until after they have begun teaching. Ideally our predictions ought to be re-examined periodically during the early years of teaching.

While we must be aware that were we able to take the above considerations into account our findings would be more conclusive, we must also recognise that we are here dealing with the very limitations of research into human behaviour. Such research must inevitably deal with what is and was, and not what we would like to be or to have been. There are also

restrictions of time, money and social consent, so that our conclusions are offered within a specific context, i.e. within recognised limitations.

We must conclude that a study of interviewing at Balls Park during 1970-71 to select teacher-training candidates shows no significant level of prediction, with the correlations between the two panel grades and final teaching assessments (+.02 and -.02) supporting Crocker's (1974) assertion that

> *...we cannot interview with any predictive certainty of selecting the more able student teachers. Wrong perceptual cues, interviewer personality, shortage of candidates for certain subjects all combine to reduce most correlations to around zero.*

The correlation between initial and final main-study grades is marginally better (+.12) but still statistically insignificant, except in one department (music) which reveals a moderate level of predictive significance but which interviewed only 23 out of 409 applicants.

Assuming that the maintenance of an interviewing programme with so insignificant a level of predictive certainty is unsatisfactory, we may point to three possible solutions: a) the replacement of interviews; b) the improvement of interviewing procedures; or c) the abandonment of interviewing altogether. We need to examine each of these in turn.

In general, although much work has been done in attempting to construct written tests which will reveal teaching aptitude, none of the results has thus far revealed a significant level of predictive validity. The most recent work, with Crocker's flexibility test, has at best attained an R level of +.41 (significant beyond the 0.001 level), which the author himself has designated a 'low level'. The Jessups (1975) have suggested that written questionnaires will eventually be superseded by performance measures, but admit that 'Objectively scored non-verbal measures of personality are still in their infancy'. Anyone involved in candidate selection would do well to keep abreast of developments in this field, but the current state of achievement does not prompt much confidence in an area where much work remains to be done. At best, formal testing can presently offer little beyond another means of obtaining rather unreliable information to supplement a substantial body of already unreliable information.

In terms of improving the interviewing programme at Balls Park, there are many areas where alterations might well be appropriate. Overall, the findings suggest that little predictive success can be obtained by assuming that 35 people with widely different backgrounds and abilities can come together without training, planning or self-criticism and operate successfully in an area of assessment already fraught with difficulties. If there must be interviewing, one would assume that its achievements would stand a better chance of improvement if the work of candidate selection were to be based on preparation, experimentation and regular evaluation, with a view to further adjustment. More specifically, changes might well prove beneficial in the following areas:

1. The General Interview Panel. The correlation coefficients for the chairpersons (+.02) and for panel members (-.02) are so close as to suggest that two people are not necessarily better than one. This is supported by the fact that 65% of the joint assessments are identical; 31% only one-half grade apart; and only 13% one grade or more apart. However, even these figures may well suggest a greater level of significant disagreement than actually existed: out of 409 interviews, the chairperson and panel member only twice disagreed about whether a candidate should be accepted or rejected, which suggests a massive amount of duplicated work. It is also unclear why, in view of the pass/fail standard now operating at final assessment of teaching ability, interviewers continue to grade on a five-point scale.

2. The Panel Member's Interview Form. Unlike the chairperson's form, which requires largely factual, administrative information, the panel member's form seems designed to keep him writing, though to no apparent purpose. Much of what is written on these forms can have no use outside the interview situation: it is not passed on to the Clearing House in the case of rejected candidates; it is not accessible to lecturers once the student has begun his course; and no effort is made to keep it up to date. A re-assessment of this form by a team of interviewers might well prove profitable, in which case we can note three kinds of information currently demanded:

   a) physical description: a photograph might be an appropriate substitute for appearance, and attempts might be made to define speech more accurately, perhaps on a measurement scale under differentiated aspects;

   b) what the candidate alone can know: religion, reading, interests and whether the candidate feels he can work on his own could be dealt with on the college application form;

   c) what the interviewer must try to assess: perceptions about intellect and personality must obviously figure in any assessment, but it would be helpful if interviewers operated within the same definitions.

   On the other hand, a careful study of this form might well suggest that some of what it asked for was irrelevant or accessible only to a clairvoyant; that in at least some respects (the religious, bookish teacher with many interests) it posited a cultural and professional prototype of dubious authenticity; and that it might be replaced by a form more like that used for main-study interviews (see Appendix).

3. The General Interview Situation. If he could be freed from his writing burden, the panel member could come out from behind his desk or table, in which case he might attempt to develop some of the strategies calalogued by the Jessups (1975).[1] A one-to-one interviewing situation might also promote a more relaxed atmosphere. It might be interesting as well to experiment with whether interviewees felt more at ease with younger members of staff, or with high-ranking senior staff (including the Principal and Deputy-Principal). In terms of predictive skill, college hierarchical status was not a significant factor in 1970-71.

1. See page 2.

4. The Experience of Candidates. In view of the discrepancy between the perceptions of the Academic Registrar and those of the Principal,[1] it would be useful to do some research among candidates to determine how they saw interviewing, whether they felt they had learnt about the college and had an opportunity to look around. Whatever the effectiveness of the interviewing programme from the point of view of academic staff, one must remember that interviewing is a two-way process, that the interviewee has an equal right to commit himself only after assessing the institution, and that in 1970-71, 23% of the accepted candidates chose not to return to Balls Park.

5. The Main-Study Interview. Both the presence of one department (music) which attained a significant predictive level, and the small numbers of interviewees involved in individual departmental assessments lead one to conclude that more work might usefully be done in evaluating the work in this area of interviewing. Clearly main-study interviewing ought to have greater predictive significance (it did marginally), since candidates are being assessed with regard to a field of work in which they have already been operating for several years, whereas the general interview is intended to locate as yet untried teaching potential. Even where candidates have had teaching 'experience', it has been generally of a superficial variety. One line of departure might be towards performance testing: this was employed by both the music and French departments; the art department generally required examples of the candidates' work, but these were pre-selected and perhaps not necessarily representative or typical. On the other hand, one must remember that 11% of the 1971 entry changed their main studies after arriving at college and that many other institutions do not interview for main studies, particularly in the case of candidates for primary training.

Yet, even if all of these suggestions were to be taken up, it is still uncertain to what extent the predictive value of interviewing could be enhanced at Balls Park: for genuine reliability we would want correlation coefficients of the order of +.50 or +.60, and ideally +.70 to +.90: we are, after all, dealing with people, with life-long commitments for many, and with the educational possibilities of generations yet unborn. Nevertheless, within the present limits of our knowledge, to anticipate such high levels of correlation from interviewing - or testing - is premature, to say the least.

The answer may lie in another direction, that of an open-entry policy for teacher training, with the corollary of easy-exit which is implied by easy-entry. If we possess no genuine skill in predicting teaching success, and if, in any event, teachers 'select themselves', then the answer may lie in demanding the minimum academic qualifications deemed necessary[2] and then allowing people to try teaching and to decide for themselves whether they wish to continue or to turn to different activities.

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1. See page 9 and page 10.

2. See page 9, where a potential area of abuse is revealed: it is unclear why this loophole has remained open.

That we may well be moving in this direction can perhaps be seen in current tendencies in teacher-training:

1. The abandonment of monotechnics and the incorporation of teacher training under a polytechnic umbrella, which may well facilitate both entry to and exit from such training, so that the emphasis is less on vocational commitment than on regarding teaching as an activity one might well try prior to final commitment.

2. The movement towards general higher educational qualifications, such as the Dip. H.E., which, again under the polytechnic umbrella, may take institutional admission away from the trainers of teachers and place it within the general responsibility of the institution as a whole.

3. The avowed intention of the D.E.S. to promote home-based higher education, which will eventually have the effect of reducing the field of candidate selection.

4. The status of teaching within the larger context of a declining educational industry, so that as pupil numbers fall and teacher employment becomes more difficult, there may well develop competition for applicants where once there was competition among applicants.

The interviewing procedures under review in this paper were very much the product of a period of expansion in teacher training. They operated in a college which had no difficulties in attracting a larger number of candidates than it could accept: within this context, interviewing may well have seemed the only just means of locating those candidates who must perforce have been rejected. In a changing educational climate, the conditions and assumptions of the past may no longer hold true.

In September, 1976, Balls Park College will cease to exist as a separate institution and will merge with Wall Hall College to form the Hertfordshire College of Higher Education. Since September, 1975, both colleges have been interviewing candidates for the new institution; each has had a tradition of quite different interviewing procedures; and each has persevered in its traditional practices. Within a few months such divergence will no longer be acceptable, and both colleges will need to adopt an agreed selection process. It would be useful if a critical evaluation of past performance could be the basis for instituting improved procedures. It might also be an appropriate occasion on which to open up the whole question of candidate selection to the rigours of academic debate.

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APPENDIX

Interviewing Forms

I.B.N. 1837

Chairperson's Form

BALLS PARK COLLEGE OF EDUCATION - Admissions.

Interview record for completion by chairman of interviewing panel.

(Where alternative answers are given please delete as appropriate)

Name of candidate: _____ SEX: Man / Woman

Eligibility:

Has candidate minimum academic qualifications? Yes / No

Is candidate also applying for university or other course of Higher Education? Yes / No

Has candidate previously received grant aid for a course of Higher Education? Yes / No

If so, give brief details:

Course details:

Age range preferred:

Infant

Infant/Junior

Junior

Junior/Secondary

Secondary

Probable Special Subject:

_____

Status: Resident / Day

Does candidate wish to proceed to Cambridge B.Ed. in 4th year?.. Yes / No
" " " " " " C.N.A.A. B.Ed. if suitably qualified? Yes / No

RESULT OF INTERVIEW

Interview grade		Recommendations
Panel Chairman	=	Accept
Second Panel Member	=	Possibly accept
Special Subject Dept.	=	Reject

Conditions attached to acceptance

Is candidate recommended for exceptional admission? Yes / No

Is candidate recommended for remission of part of course? Yes / No

If so, say whether for one or two years _____

General comments on candidate:

Date: _____ Signature: _____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

I.B.N. 1837

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Panel Member's Form, Ordinary Students

BALLS PARK COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, HERTFORD.

University Applicant Yes/No. Date of Interview _____

Interview check list

Please enter brief comments under each heading.

Name of Candidate: Age range preferred: _____

_____ Probable special subject: _____

Occupation of Father: _____

Religion: _____ Place in Family: _____

Appearance:
Speech:
Intellect:
Personality:
Interests (including Youth Organisations):
Reading:
Sense of Vocation:
Ability to work on her/his own:
Teaching experience:
School Assessment:

Any other remarks:

General assessment of suitability. Ring appropriate grade

A	B	C	D	E
Very Good	Good	Average	Weak	Unsuitable

Date: 3/1 Signature:

I.B.N. 1837

Panel Member's Form, Mature Students

BALLS PARK COLLEGE OF EDUCATION.

University Applicant Yes/No

Date of Interview _____

Interview check list.

Please enter brief comments under each heading.

Name of Candidate: _____

Age range preferred: _____

Probable special subject: _____

Former Occupation: _____

Occupation of Husband/Wife: _____

Religion: _____

Family: _____

Arrangements for Family: _____

Transport: _____

Appearance:
Speech:
Intellect:
Personality:
Interests:
Reading:
Sense of Vocation:
Ability to work on her/his own:
Teaching experience:

Any other remarks:

General assessment of suitability. Ring appropriate grade

A	B	C	D	E
Very good	Good	Average	Weak	Unsuitable

Date: _____

Signature: _____

I.B.N. 1837

Balls Park College of Education.

Date of Interview: _____

MAIN STUDY Interview Sheet.

Name of Candidate:

_____

Age range preferred: _____

Probable Main Study _____

COMMENTS.

General assessment of suitability. Ring appropriate grade

A	B	C	D	E
Very Good	Good	Average	Weak	Unsuitable

Date: _____ Signature: _____

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